

**FUTURE FISHERIES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM  
GRANT APPLICATION**

*(please fill in the highlighted areas)*

**I. APPLICANT INFORMATION**

A. Applicant Name: Jim Olsen

B. Mailing Address: 313 Galaxy Dr

C. City: Butte State: MT Zip: 59701

Telephone: 533-8451

D. Contact Person: Same as above

Address if different from Applicant:

City:  State:  Zip:

Telephone:

E. Landowner and/or Lessee Name  
(if other than Applicant): State of Montana DNRC, Crane Ranches LLC (grazing lessee)

Mailing Address:

City:  State:  Zip:

Telephone:

**II. PROJECT INFORMATION\***

A. Project Name: McVey Creek riparian fence and bridge crossing

River, stream, or lake: McVey Creek

Location: Township 2S Range 15W Section 12

County: Beaverhead

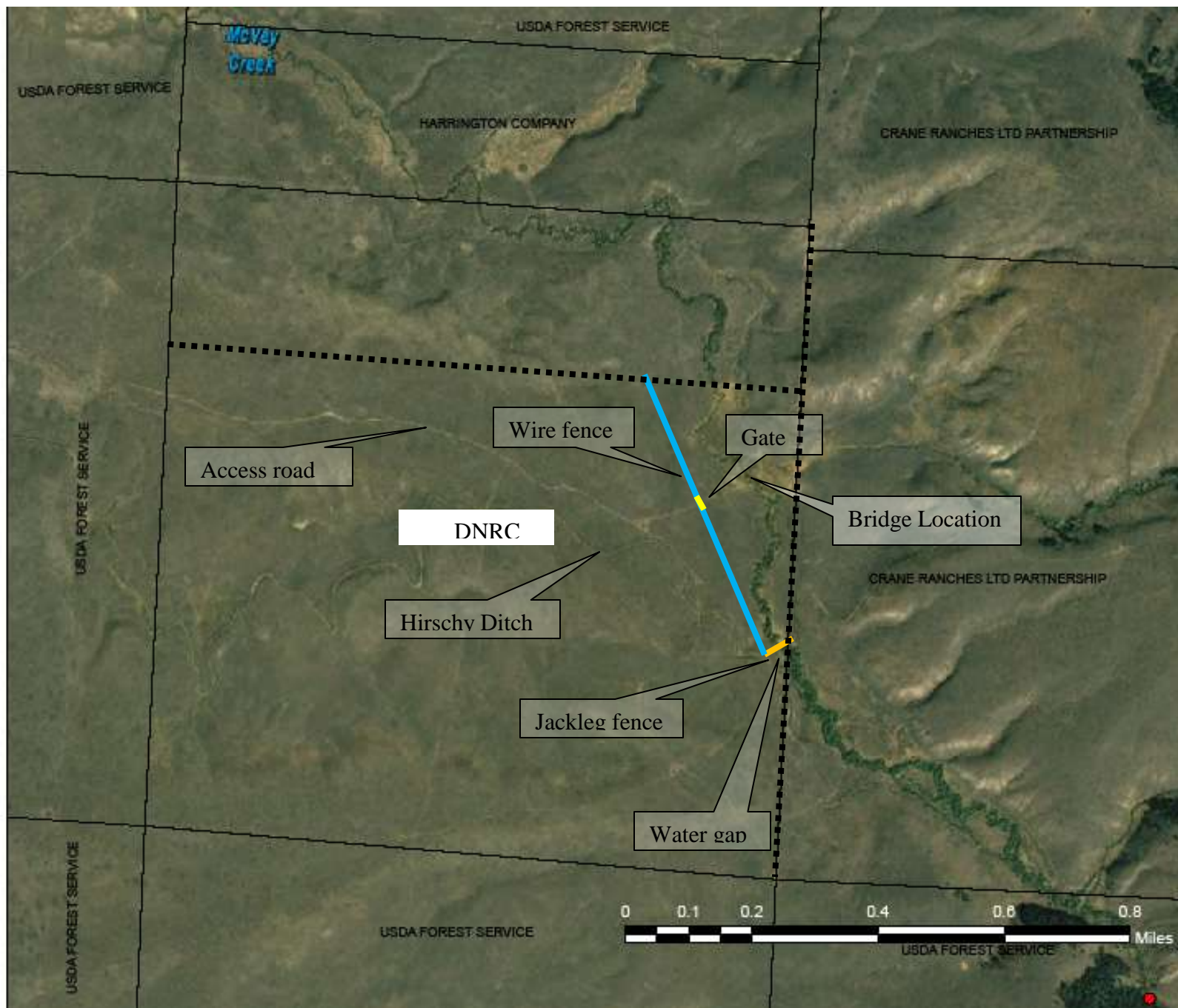
B. Purpose of Project:

1. Construct a riparian fence to exclude cattle grazing and improve riparian conditions to benefit recently restored westslope cutthroat trout.
2. Create a livestock watering area by hardening a gap in the fence.
3. Replace a road ford through McVey Creek with a bridge to improve the condition of the crossing and reduce impacts of repeated fords across the stream.

C. Brief Project Description:

McVey Creek is a tributary to the Big Hole River approximately 6 miles north of the town of Wisdom. It harbors an unhybridized population of westslope cutthroat trout which was restored in 2011 and 2012 through the construction of a fish migration barrier and removal of brook trout upstream. Once the stream leaves the mountains and Forest Service lands, it flows through a wide valley with a mix of private property and lands administered by the DNRC. The grazing system for the DNRC managed property includes a rest rotation system where pastures are grazed early, late and then rested. This has resulted in improved riparian conditions. The riparian area on the upper part of the creek is densely vegetated with willows. A riparian assessment was performed on the stream from the upstream DNRC boundary to the Highway 43 crossing. The rating for most this reach of stream was sustainable and improving. The existing grazing plan appears to be resulting in improving riparian conditions with the exception of a few reaches that have been slow in recovery. The proposed fence and bridge would address the riparian conditions in one of the more heavily impacted reaches which lacks the willow cover found both upstream and downstream. In this impacted reach the cattle tend to camp on the stream because of the arid condition of the adjoining landscape resulting in trampled banks and reduced woody vegetation. The reach of stream targeted for a riparian fence has a lack of willow cover which is present both upstream and downstream (figure 1). Willows, particularly juvenile plants, are present in the reach where the riparian fence is proposed but constant grazing has limited their growth. The proposed riparian fence would allow the willows to grow and mature and provide for bank stability and stream shading. The fence would consist of treated wood post and 4 strand wildlife friendly wire at 16 (smooth), 22, 28 and 40 inches (barbed). The fence would tie into an existing fence on the north end of the pasture and run in a straight line southeast to near the property boundary. There would be a metal gate installed where the access road crosses the proposed fence (see map below). At the southeast corner, there would be a 175 ft section of jackleg fence that would run northeast descending a steep slope, crossing McVey Creek and tying into an existing fence on the section boundary. This would provide a 25-ft water gap for livestock. To reduce the impacts of watering at this location, the bed and banks would be hardened by importing gravel and cobble and placing it on the bed and banks of the creek to prevent stream widening and excessive turbidity. Additional water is available from the Hirschey Ditch, but if the ditch is not in operation the stream is the only source of water for this pasture.

A single ford through McVey Creek is present on the road accessing the National Forest. A log bridge historically was used to cross McVey Creek; however, this bridge has long since failed and a stream ford has been established in its place. The McVey Creek road is an important access route to Block Management lands (Crane Ranches) and the National Forest. The ford is used extensively as it is only means of accessing private and public lands farther upstream. This has resulted in an over-widened stream channel and extensive bank erosion. We are proposing to replace the existing ford with a bridge. The bridge will be made of concrete blocks for footers and 22-ft treated wood stringers. A treated wood deck will be placed on the stringers. The concrete blocks will be set at a minimum of 2 ft below the streambed elevation and away from the active channel approximately 5 ft on both sides. Riprap will be placed around the block abutments. Native sod will be transplanted to reform the appropriate channel dimensions at the site (bankfull with of approximately 4 ft.). The bridge will span approximately 15 ft and will be a minimum of 4 ft above the bed of the stream. The floodplain in this reach is approximately 75 ft wide and the bridge approach on the west side of the stream will be left low to accommodate flood flows that cannot pass under the bridge. The 100 year flood estimated for another project about 4 miles farther downstream was approximately 200 cfs and was able to pass through a 4x8 ft weir opening. The bridge stringers (FWP) concrete footers and gravel (DNRC) have already been acquired. The funds requested are for the bridge decking and the contractor to perform the work and transport the material to the site.



Map1. Proposed fence, water gap and bridge to improve riparian conditions on McVey Creek. The dotted lines indicate existing fences. The solid colored lined indicated the proposed fence

D. Length of stream or size of lake that will be treated: 0.5 miles of stream

E. Project Budget:

**Grant Request (Dollars):** \$ **\$9,000 (fence/water gap) + \$10,100 for bridge = \$19,100**

Contribution by Applicant (Dollars): \$ In-kind \$

(salaries of government employees are not considered as matching contributions)

Contribution from other Sources (Dollars):   \$ \$6,800                      In-kind   \$ \$2,500  
(attach verification - See page 2 budget template)

**Total Project Cost:**           \$ \$28,400

- F. Attach itemized (line item) budget – see template
- G. Attach specific project plans, detailed sketches, plan views, photographs, maps, evidence of landowner consent, evidence of public support, and/or other information necessary to evaluate the merits of the project. If project involves water leasing or water salvage complete supplemental questionnaire ([fwp.mt.gov/habitat/futurefisheries/supplement2.doc](http://fwp.mt.gov/habitat/futurefisheries/supplement2.doc)).
- H. Attach land management and maintenance plans that will ensure protection of the reclaimed area. A land management agreement is required for all westslope cutthroat projects in FWP Region 3 that occur on public lands prior to project initiation and will be completed at the time the EA is completed.

### III. PROJECT BENEFITS\*

- A. What species of fish will benefit from this project?:

Westslope cutthroat trout

- B. How will the project protect or enhance wild fish habitat?:

The project will exclude livestock grazing which will allow the riparian area to heal and woody vegetation to become established. The bridge will reduce erosion and turbidity and will restore the natural stream dimensions to a section of channel that is over-widened by the road ford crossing.

- C. Will the project improve fish populations and/or fishing? To what extent?:

The project will aid in improve habitat in McVey Creek which harbors a non-hybridized population of westslope cutthroat trout.

- D. Will the project increase public fishing opportunity for wild fish and, if so, how?:

McVey Creek is a small stream that does not receive much if any fishing pressure so public fishing opportunities will likely remain the same.

- E. If the project requires maintenance, what is your time commitment to this project?:

The fence will likely need periodic maintenance. Maintenance will be performed by FWP.

- F. What was the cause of habitat degradation in the area of this project and how will the project correct the cause?:

The habitat in McVey Creek is in very good condition in the upper reaches of the watershed on National Forest System lands and for the first mile on the private and DNRC ground. The riparian area on the upper part of the creek is densely vegetated with willows. A riparian assessment was performed on the stream from the upstream DNRC boundary to the Highway 43 crossing. The rating for most this reach of stream was sustainable and improving. There were a few exceptional reaches where livestock have impacted the stream and the channel condition is degraded. The proposed riparian fence will be in a location where impacts are more significant than other reaches. The existing grazing plan appears to be resulting in improving riparian conditions with the exception of a few reaches that have been slow in recovery. The proposed fence and bridge will address the riparian conditions in one of the more heavily impacted reaches which lacks the willow cover found both upstream and downstream.

- G. What public benefits will be realized from this project?:

The public benefit of the project is the long-term conservation of native westslope cutthroat trout and improvement in the riparian conditions of the stream. McVey Creek is one of only a few non-hybridized populations of westslope cutthroat trout in the Big Hole.

H. Will the project interfere with water or property rights of adjacent landowners? (explain):

No. The lessee has given his consent to construct the fence

I. Will the project result in the development of commercial recreational use on the site?: (explain):

No.

J. Is this project associated with the reclamation of past mining activity?:

No.

**Each approved project sponsor must enter into a written agreement with the Department specifying terms and duration of the project.**

#### **IV. AUTHORIZING STATEMENT**

I (we) hereby declare that the information and all statements to this application are true, complete, and accurate to the best of my (our) knowledge and that the project or activity complies with rules of the Future Fisheries Improvement Program.

Applicant Signature:

Date:

Sponsor (if applicable):

**\*Highlighted boxes will automatically expand.**

**Mail To: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Habitat Protection Bureau  
PO Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701**

**Incomplete or late applications will be returned to applicant.**

**Applications may be rejected if this form is modified.**

**\*\*\*Applications may be submitted at anytime, but must be received by the Future Fisheries Program office in Helena before December 1 and June 1 of each year to be considered for the subsequent funding period.\*\*\***